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**Should the Public Schools  
Furnish Text-Books  
Free to All  
Pupils?**

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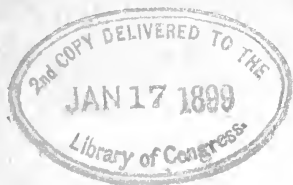
BY

PRINCIPAL WILLIAM I. MARSHALL  
OF CHICAGO.

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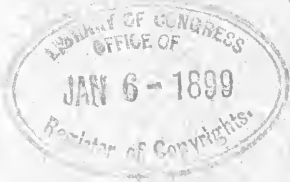
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# SHOULD THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FURNISH TEXT-BOOKS FREE TO ALL PUPILS?

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By Principal WILLIAM I. MARSHALL.

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In June, 1894, a member of the Chicago Board of Education sent a letter to the principals of the city schools, asking if in their opinion free text-books would increase the attendance in the schools.

The author answered that, notwithstanding he had lived twelve years in Massachusetts under free books, he had been so much opposed to them (though without taking any pains to investigate the subject), that he had always bought all the books his daughter had used in both the elementary and the high school, and that, not wishing to express an opinion based on prejudice, he would thoroughly investigate the workings of free text-books throughout the country and report what results had followed the adoption of free text-books, and how leading educators who had had much experience with the system felt about its practical workings.

## DESIRED EVIDENCE NOT IN PRINT.

Supposing that he would readily find the desired evidence in print, he wrote to his old friends, Hon. J. W. Dickinson, formerly State Superintendent of Instruction of Massachusetts, whose term, from 1876 to 1893, covered eight years of permissive free text-books, and nine years of compulsory free text-books, and Hon. F. A. Hill, the present incumbent of the same office, in which he succeeded Secretary Dickinson in 1893, and to Hon. W. T. Harris, National Commissioner of Education, but found that no such compilation as he expected to find was in existence, the nearest approach to it being an address before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1887, by Thomas Emerson, Superintendent of Schools of Newton, Mass., which is very valuable, but having been prepared only three years after the adoption of compulsory free text-books by Massachusetts, of course, gives no such results of that great experiment as are now obtainable, and a brief discussion of the subject (with tabular statement of

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the then existing condition of the laws in the several states), in the report of Commissioner Harris, for 1888-89, pp. 532-578.

Feeling bound by the promise to investigate, a correspondence was begun which it was supposed would not be very extensive and would be concluded in a few weeks, but finding that free text-books had been very much more widely adopted than he had previously supposed, or than appeared from Emerson's address and Commissioner Harris' report, he continued it till it embraced every state and territory (except Alaska) and all the large cities and many of the smaller cities and towns using free books.

The result is this monograph, containing more information than is elsewhere to be had on the free text-book question, and which he hopes may contribute toward the advancement of one of the most important educational movements of this generation, and one which, with no great organizations pushing it, and all the great school book publishers covertly opposing it, has made more rapid progress than any other movement in the history of public school education.

### LIMITATIONS OF STATISTICS.

Necessarily in inquiries relating to educational systems, where much must ever be a matter of opinion, no such numerical precision of statistics is possible, as is obtainable in reports of agricultural, mineral or manufacturing productions, or the operations of transportation companies.

### METHOD EMPLOYED IN THE INVESTIGATION.

The following circular letter was prepared:

Chicago, September 18th, 1894.

Dear Sir: Will you please inform me how the system of free text-books, which has now, I believe, been in use in the Old Bay State for about ten years, is working?

Has it, in your judgment, absolutely increased the attendance of children at school, or has it merely resulted in increasing the attendance at the public schools, by withdrawing children from parochial and other private schools, where free text-books are not provided?

Is there any considerable opposition to the law at present, or any probability that it will be repealed?

If, in your judgment, it has resulted in an absolute increase of attendance, has that increase been distributed pretty uniformly through the various grades, or has it been very considerably greater in some grades than in others, and if so, in what grades?

Yours truly,

WILLIAM I. MARSHALL.

and a copy of it sent to State Superintendent Hill and ex-State Superintendent Dickinson of Massachusetts, and to the city superintendents of the twenty-one largest cities of that state, containing more than one-half of the population of the state, and embracing the utmost possible diversity of population—purely manufacturing places in special lines, like Lowell, Lawrence and Fall River in textiles, Lynn and Brockton in shoes; sea-board cities largely devoted to maritime pursuits, like Gloucester and New Bedford and Salem; places largely residence and noted as educational centers, like Cambridge, Quincy and Northampton, and places noted for the great variety of their manufactures, like Springfield, Holyoke, Fitchburg and Worcester.

Similar letters were sent to the superintendents of New York City, Philadelphia and all other large cities using free text-books, and to many

smaller cities and towns, and to the state superintendents of all states which have adopted free text-books, and upon the question of danger of spreading contagious diseases through use of free text-books to the State Board of Health of Massachusetts and the city boards of health of New York and Philadelphia.

Mr. Emerson's address and the report of Commissioner Harris, hereinbefore referred to, were carefully studied, and the author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to them for many items of much value.

## HOW BEST TO CONSIDER THE SUBJECT.

The subject seems to best present itself for consideration under the following heads:

- (a) The arguments for, and objections against, free text-books.
- (b) The cost per pupil per annum, both absolute and relative, to the cost of individual ownership.
- (c) The history and present status of free text-books.

### (a) THE ARGUMENTS FOR A FREE TEXT-BOOK LAW

are:

1. It makes the schools strictly free, removing the only barrier that often suffices to keep the children of very poor parents out of school, and so increases the attendance, especially in the higher grades, where it is particularly desirable that it should be increased.

## PROF. H. B. SPRAGUE'S ARGUMENT FROM ABOLITION OF RATE BILLS.

Prof. Homer B. Sprague (for some years Principal of the Girls' High School in Boston), in discussing the subject in 1878, when no state had passed a compulsory free text-book law, and but few cities and towns in Massachusetts had adopted free text-books, under the permissive laws of 1873, said:

"It may seem strange that so slight an expense, say from two to six dollars a year, should keep any out of the public schools, but those who are in the habit of visiting the wretched abodes of the poor and see how hard it is for many of them to get employment or earn money enough for the bare necessities of life know very well that multitudes of parents cannot pay for their children's books.

"Of course, it is impossible to ascertain exactly how many are thus kept out of school, but we may gain some light on this point from the history of the abolition of rate bills. Rate bills were a money tax paid for tuition in the public schools. Every child, except those excused for extreme poverty, paid for tuition a sum proportioned to the number of days he attended. This rate bill existed in about half the towns of Connecticut in the year 1867; its amount was limited by law, in grades below the high school, to six dollars a year. The usual amount of the rate bill, or tuition tax, paid by each child in those schools, was from two to three dollars. In the year 1868, it was the good fortune of the writer of this essay to aid in the complete abolition of that tax, so removing that apparently slight barrier to school instruction.

"What was the result? The official report of the secretary, Dr. Northrop, for the year 1869, shows that the actual increase in school attendance during that year was about six thousand pupils, though there was no perceptible increase in the total population of the state. The next year there was another increase of about five thousand. Secretary Northrop, in express terms, attributes this increase to the removal of the rate bill. About eleven thousand pupils, then in Connecticut, prior to 1869, had been kept out of school by the rate bill, although its average amount did not exceed three dollars a year.

"Is it objected that the experience of Connecticut is peculiar? Take a very different community—California. In 1866 a rate bill existed in many towns in that state. The amount paid by each child for attendance was, on an average, about twenty-five cents a month, or two dollars and a half during the school year of ten months. In 1866 the rate bill was abolished by law in California. The consequent increase in attendance was six and one-half per cent. In other words, a number equal to one-sixteenth of the entire school attendance had been debarred from instruction by the slight tax of twenty-five cents a month.

"Is further evidence needed to show that many children are kept away from school by the requirement to pay two or three dollars a year? Take the state of New York. Five days ago, wishing to ascertain the facts with precision, the writer consulted the highest authority in that state, Hon. S. B. Woolworth, now and for many years past the Secretary of the Regents of the University of the State of New York. He replied, under date of Albany, N. Y., Dec. 24, 1878, as follows:

"The rate bill was abolished by law in New York in the year 1867. The increase in attendance in the public schools, consequent upon this abolition of rate bills, is estimated at 22,000 the first year, 50,000 the second year and 78,000 the third year. The average amount of tuition, i. e., the average amount of the rate bill, was perhaps \$2.75."

"There is no resisting the conclusion from such facts as these. If in California a number equal to one-sixteenth of the whole attendance, if in Connecticut 11,000 children, if in New York 78,000 children, all of whom had been growing up in ignorance, were drawn into public schools by exempting them from the payment of twenty-five cents or thirty cents a month for tuition, then it is safe to conclude that there are multitudes who would be likely to be drawn into the public schools by exempting them from the payment of an equal sum for books and stationery.

"Here we may be allowed to speak a brief word for those who are too humble or too feeble to speak for themselves. Indeed, they cannot speak without bringing upon themselves new shame.

"Their tender love for their children, their ardent desire to secure for them a better lot than that of their parents, prompts the sending of them to the public school. But they have not even money enough for bread and decent clothing and they cannot buy books. Private charity does not supply them and is totally inadequate to supply them. For such the public schools are not free; they must make the humiliating confession of utter poverty before they can receive the boon of instruction. This undeserved shame is the price they and their children must pay for education.

"They recoil from the idea of 'coming upon the parish.' No laceration more cruel of the feelings of a sensitive parent or child can be found.



More than once during the past four months I have been made the unwilling witness of the distress of parents who had seen better days, but who now begged me, with tears, to supply their children with public books and to keep concealed the fact of this mortifying dependence upon public charity. Is it supposed that they do not feel it, because they say nothing about it? Because they do not tell the world of their shame and wretchedness?

"They do feel it keenly. Let the supply be free to all and you visibly lift thousands of heads now bowed with this unmerited disgrace; you visibly lift many thousands of children above the degradation of confessed pauperism. Put them on a level with their more favored companions, they at once become less servile, less abject, more hopeful; they will grow to be manlier men and womanlier women; in time of public danger they will uphold with a stronger arm and a more loving patriotism the hand of the commonwealth that has so gently and generously led and lifted them in their hour of weakness."

2. It secures absolute uniformity of text-books in every city, town, village or rural district which adopts it.

3. It is cheaper for the community than the individual purchase of books, as all are bought at lowest wholesale prices by the school authorities of each city, town or other community.

4. It furnishes the schools a large variety of books, thus giving a much wider range to the "individuality" of the teachers (which is, after all, in the ultimate analysis, that upon which the highest success of any school finally rests), and adding to the variety and extent of the sources of knowledge offered to the pupils, very many of whom have little or no chance to become acquainted with the best thoughts of the world's great poets, historians and other thinkers, except what glimpses they get of them in their all too brief stay in the public school.

Thus pupils, instead of having their reading confined to one text-book (as is the case where pupils own their own books), will have an opportunity, by exchanging the books of different rooms in the same school, or different schools in a city, to read in ten or a dozen books.

## PURCHASE OF SUPPLEMENTARY READING CONCEDES THE PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IN FREE TEXT-BOOKS.

This is now deemed of so much consequence that in most large cities which are at all progressive in their school affairs—as for some years past in Chicago—an effort has been made to secure this result by a very liberal purchase of what is known as supplementary reading matter by the Board of Education, which purchase is a tacit concession of the whole principle on which free text-books rest, to wit, that whatever expenditure the Board deems best adapted to promoting the highest efficiency of the schools they may properly make.

5. The system of free text-books effects a great saving of time at the beginning of each term of school, for, whereas, under the system of individual ownership, it is well known that in all schools it is some days, and sometimes weeks, before all the pupils are supplied with the necessary books, so that the regular work of the classes can go on satisfactorily, under the system of free text-books every pupil is supplied the first day of school.

6. It secures better classification, especially in country schools, where.

with a less rigid discipline than city boards of education are able to maintain, and with many families only visiting the towns at long intervals, many pupils have been compelled, under the system of individual ownership, to remain in classes that they had mentally outgrown, because their parents would not provide the books requisite for their advancement, or would so long delay the purchase of them that their children only entered the higher class when their more fortunate schoolmates had already made some weeks' progress in it.

7. Free text-books cultivate in pupils that respect for, and careful use of, public property which all citizens ought to show, but which is too often utterly wanting in the character alike of young and old.

All pupils, being required to use books with care and return them without any injury other than natural and proper wear, form habits, at school, under the direction and advice of their teachers, which are of a most beneficial influence on their characters, and whose moral advantages it would be impossible to measure by dollars and cents.

## THE OBJECTIONS TO FREE TEXT-BOOKS

were well discussed by State Superintendent Dickinson of Massachusetts, in his report for 1885, as follows:

"Before the act of 1884 was passed sixteen towns in the commonwealth had voluntarily adopted the free text-book system. In all cases of fair trial the most satisfactory results have been produced.

"The few objections that have been made to the free system are:

"1. It prevents the children from owning the books they use, and from preserving them for the future.

"2. It cultivates a spirit of dependence.

"3. Contagious diseases may be communicated by second-hand books.

"4. Why not furnish board and clothes as well as books?

"5. It requires the expenditure of a large amount of time in purchasing and distributing the books and supplies among the schools.

"These are the objections usually made.

"The use of the free text-book system does not prevent a pupil from becoming the owner of the books he studies, nor, if that were possible, of preserving them. This may be done even at less expense than under the old system.

"Experience, however, has proved that school books are generally worn out by the use to which they are subjected in the school-room and that future reference is more profitably made to new books, representing the latest phase of human thought on the subjects of which they treat. Old school books are interesting relics. They are even useful as occasions for reviving old associations, but they are not always safe guides in the acquisition of new knowledge. School books should be bought for present use, as they will be quite surely out of date when the future arrives.

"If the statement that the free text-book system takes away the manly feeling of independence, which should be strong in every mind, has any force, it presents an argument against the whole system of free schools. Why is not the manly spirit corrupted by furnishing free teachers and free school houses and free apparatus to be used as the means of teaching? On what principle may we furnish everything else free with good results, but cannot furnish free books without harm? As a fact, neither are the schools nor the means of study free to the people in any absolute sense.

"The expense of supporting them is borne by those for whose benefit they were established. This is done by a general tax, levied in such a manner that the burden of support is made to rest equally on all. With this understanding the people accept their free school privileges, not as a charity, but as a gift presented by themselves.

"Free text-books have been used for many years in some of the towns in our own state, and in some of the cities and towns of almost every other state in the Union. No complaint has hitherto been made that these books are the media through which disease is actually communicated.

"The sanitary objections to the use of second-hand school books may be more reasonably urged against the use of books drawn from our circulating libraries, and handled by persons exposed to all the conditions of social life, or against paper money, that by its associations may become the media of many kinds of exchange.

"It should not be forgotten that the legislature has passed stringent laws regulating the attendance of children who are suffering with contagious diseases, or who have been exposed to them, and that the free text-books are all committed to the care of the teachers of the schools.

"The Iowa State Board of Health sent out a circular letter to about four hundred physicians residing in Iowa and other states:

"In response about two hundred and fifty opinions were received from physicians in different parts of the United States, who, however much they may disagree upon other subjects, were unanimous in this, that there is no doubt that diseases may be communicated by this means, but they knew of none, nor have they heard of one.

"The only approach to anything of value comes from a physician in Michigan, who relates a case of scarlet fever communicated by means of a novel, which was read by a young lady convalescent from scarlatina, and which was afterward loaned to another. From the best information I can obtain, I am strongly inclined to the opinion that of all methods by which disease is communicated, that by second-hand school books is the least to be expected. Upon the approach of physical disorder the books of study, which are usually tasks, and at best require considerable mental effort, are the first to be thrown aside and the last to be resumed in convalescence.

"If any reading at all is to be resorted to, it is generally such as will amuse—light literature, everywhere to be found—and not books the use of which means labor."—(H. H. Clark, member of Iowa State Board of Health.)

"The objection suggested in the question, 'Why not furnish clothes as well as books?' has little significance when we consider that the state, by its compulsory laws, creates the legal necessity of purchasing books, while the necessity for clothes would exist if there were no schools to attend. Clothes should be furnished at public expense whenever this is necessary to attendance.

"The advantages of the free text-book system are so many and so important that a considerable expenditure of time and labor may well be made. Experience and a proper division of labor will lessen both, until a thorough application of the system will not be considered a burden."

#### COST OF FREE TEXT-BOOKS PER PUPIL PER ANNUM.

(b) The cost per pupil, per annum, for text-books and all supplies, is given as \$0.882 by Superintendent Stone of Springfield, Mass., in his

report for 1886; as \$0.99 per pupil by Superintendent Henry S. Maxson of Attleboro, Mass., in his report for 1886; as \$0.66 per pupil, as the average of four years, by Superintendent E. E. Thomas of Woonsocket, R. I.; as "an average of about \$0.45 per pupil" by Superintendent Wm. N. Barringer of Newark, N. J., where free text-books have been furnished for more than thirty years.

Superintendent Geo. H. Barton of Jersey City writes: "For many years free text-books have been furnished to the pupils of the public schools in this city. This plan has proven very satisfactory.

"The cost per pupil has varied from \$0.50 to \$1.25 per year for books and stationery."

The controllers of the public schools of the city and county of Philadelphia say, in a report on this subject: "The expense of supplies to each pupil is, however, far less than is generally supposed. The annual expense of supplying books and stationery is about \$0.70 to each pupil," and under date of May 24, 1887, Mr. H. W. Halliwell, Secretary of the Philadelphia Board, writes: "The cost of books and other supplies for many years has ranged from \$0.80 to \$1.00 per pupil."

State Superintendent Luce of Maine, in his report for 1893-94, p. 13, gives the cost of free books for the whole state, per pupil attending, as follows: 1890-91, \$1.16; 1891-92, \$0.54; 1892-93, \$0.34; 1893-94, \$0.40.

#### BOSTON SCHOOL BOARD MUCH OPPOSED TO FREE TEXT-BOOKS, BUT, WITH ONLY THREE YEARS' EXPERIENCE, CONVERTED TO FRIENDS OF THE SYSTEM.

The Boston School Board was active and pronounced in its opposition to the compulsory free text-book law, when it was under consideration in the Legislature in 1884, and even after its enactment was quite reluctant to carry it into operation, and as this opposition was not that of ignorant men, guided by caprice and prejudice, but an opposition based on the strong (though, as events have proved, mistaken) convictions of a body of able, honest and uncommonly intelligent men, whose great experience in school affairs and devotion to the best welfare of the schools entitled their judgment to much more than ordinary weight, the opinion of the Board as to its practical working was looked for with great interest.

The Committee on Supplies reported as follows, for the year 1886-87:

"The practical working of the new law is progressing very favorably and many principals report that the books are better cared for than if the pupils owned them.

"This is owing, in a great measure, to the oversight of the instructors, who are required to examine the books each month. The number of books lost is surprisingly small, and in many cases they are replaced by the pupils who lost them.

"The carrying out of the free text-book law during the past year was accomplished with very little friction.

"The instructors have familiarized themselves with the details of the work, and the necessary accounts have been more accurately kept than in previous years.

## FEW PARENTS CHOOSE TO BUY BOOKS.

"It was thought that under the free text-book system many parents would object to allowing their children to accept the loan of text-books, but experience has shown that parents, with very few exceptions, approve the use of city property by their children.

"While it is true that many pupils, having the required text-books at home, bring them for use in school, it is equally true that very few pupils, probably less than one per cent., purchase books in preference to being supplied by the city.

"If the experience of the past two years is a fair criterion of the future, regarding the care taken of the text-books, the cost for supplying pupils under the present plan will be less than was anticipated, or could have been expected from the results obtained years ago by the city in loaning books to a portion of the pupils." (This paragraph probably relates to supplying indigent pupils with books, which was required of all towns in Massachusetts, by law passed in 1826.—W. I. M.)

"The cost per scholar (for books and supplies), each year, since the free text-book act went into operation, was as follows:

"1884-85, \$73,682.46; average cost, \$1.23.

"1885-86, \$59,867.12; average cost, 98 cents.

"1886-87, \$43,884.73; average cost, 70 cents.

"From the statement above it can be noticed that the cost to the city for loaning books and furnishing stationery and drawing materials, each year for the past three years, averaged 97 cents per pupil. It is fair to presume that the plan can be continued at about this expense annually.

"The average cost to the city for the three years preceding 1884-85 was 33 cents per pupil, so that the financial result of the free text-book act, in Boston, has been to add 64 cents to the yearly cost of educating each pupil, and to relieve the parents of a somewhat larger expenditure than they would otherwise have incurred had they been obliged to purchase books for their children."

The Committee on Accounts, also referring briefly to the practical working of the system, especially in regard to its effect upon school attendance, says: "From the report of the Committee on Supplies, recently issued, it appears that the working of the free text-book law is progressing very satisfactorily and only adds, thus far, about 64 cents to the yearly cost of educating each pupil.

## MARKED INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE IN HIGHER GRADES.

"In 1884, when the law went into effect, we find that the number of pupils attending the high schools was 2,395. In 1887 the number is 2,944—an increase of 549, or about 23 per cent. in three years.

"The increase in the number of pupils in the three upper classes of the grammar schools during the past three years was about 40 per cent. greater than the increase in the three lower classes, although the proportion of pupils in the former, as compared with the latter, is less than 60 per cent.

"The free text-book act has undoubtedly been a large factor in filling up our high schools and the upper classes of the grammar schools, on account of the expense saved the parents by relieving them from the purchase of text-books, which, in these grades, requires a large sum.

"Two of the advantages thus far developed by the use of free text-

books are, first, avoiding delay in getting the schools into working order, and, second, in prolonging the school life of children." Thus in the short space of three years the School Board of Boston, from being the chief opponents of free text-books in the state, were converted to its cordial supporters by their experience with its practical workings.

(For the present opinions of the school authorities of Boston see the letter of Superintendent Seaver.)

The report of the schools of Cambridge, Mass., for 1893, says: "The average cost per pupil, for the nine years (1884-1893), \$1.219, would seem as low as can be expected, since additional text-books, especially in reading, are being introduced in accordance with the most progressive ideas, and this, of course, tends to keep up the average."

## COMPARATIVE UNIMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF COST.

As it is agreed by every person who has had experience with free text-books that the cost to the community is considerably less than that of individual ownership, the author has paid much less attention to the question of cost per pupil than to other phases of the subject, because it seems to him a comparatively unimportant matter whether the cost is 64, 75 or 90 cents per pupil, since, if the community are satisfied that free text-books will be greatly beneficial to the schools, they will give themselves little concern over a few cents per pupil, more or less.

### (c) THE HISTORY OF FREE TEXT-BOOKS.

Philadelphia has the distinction of having been the first city to adopt free text-books, in 1818, since which time it has always adhered to the plan, which, for 50 years past, has met with such universal approval as not to have been the subject of any debate or attempts at change.

New York City very long ago followed the lead of Philadelphia, though no one seems able to determine just when it adopted the plan, but it was fifty or more years ago.

Newark, Jersey City, Paterson and New Brunswick, N. J., adopted free text-books thirty or more years ago, but the precise date cannot be learned. Without any law specially authorizing it, Bristol, R. I., has always furnished free text-books, under the general provisions of the law for maintaining free public schools, and various cities, towns and rural districts in several other states have done the same, either under the same construction of the general statute or under permissive laws specially authorizing the purchase of books and other supplies, where school authorities or the voters of the district should so decide.

So far as the author has been able to learn, there is no city or town of any considerable population in the whole country that has ever given free text-books a fair trial which has ever gone back to individual ownership.

### THE SCHOOL REPORT OF WESTFIELD, MASS., FOR 1886

gives a brief history of the law of 1884, in Massachusetts, as follows:

"The first effort made in the Massachusetts Legislature to pass a law permitting school authorities to furnish free text-books was in 1868, and it

was so unpopular that not a single member of the Committee on Education would favor the measure.

"The question was discussed and commented on by the newspapers, but no active measures were taken by the Legislature till 1873, when a permissive act was passed.

"In the discussion of the question it fell to the lot of this town to be represented by a man whose father, with a large family of children, found the last cent in demand for their support.

"The question of free text-books was new to the representative, but the arguments in favor brought vividly to mind the first day he ever attended school.

"As soon as an opportunity offered he spoke as follows: 'I remember the first day I went to school. The mistress came and put her hand on my head and said: "You are coming to school, my little man, are you?"' I said, yes. She said, "Where are your books?"

"I replied that I had no books; that my father was a poor man and that he said all he could do was to get bread for us.

"The teacher turned to a boy sitting near me and said: "Perhaps you will allow the little boy to look over with you?" He kindly consented and the little learning I have I obtained from borrowed books.' The effect of the speech was magnetic.

"He had risen from the class for which the free text-book is especially needed and fully understood its necessities."

To the enactment of the compulsory free text-book law in Massachusetts there was such a very vigorous and formidable opposition (largely under the lead of the Boston School Board, though there was no division on the lines of political parties), that the final vote in the House of Representatives, when the bill was passed on March 8, 1884, was 149 yeas to 51 nays (as appears by letter of Secretary of State Wm. M. Olin, in answer to my letter of inquiry), yet, as we have seen, in three years the Boston School Board, by the practical operations of the law, were converted from its enemies to its supporters, and there has ceased to be any opposition to the law, so that no one even proposes its repeal.

## FREE TEXT-BOOKS SURE TO COME TO ALL PROGRESSIVE STATES.

The author began this investigation quite strongly opposed to free text-books, but, with the amendment in the practical administration of the scheme which has always seemed to him indispensable to its completeness, and which ex-Secretary Dickinson predicts will be made to it in Massachusetts, viz., that the books used by each pupil should be retained by him when he leaves the school, he is now fully satisfied that free text-books should be furnished to all public schools and that every progressive state in the nation will soon follow the lead of all the states east of Indiana, and of Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Nebraska, Colorado and Idaho with permissive or compulsory free text-book laws, and that all that pass permissive laws will speedily, like Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Nebraska, Idaho and Pennsylvania, supersede them with compulsory free text-book laws, because of the beneficial result of the operation of the permissive laws in the cities and towns which avail themselves of the permission to furnish free text-books.

## COMPULSORY LAW DOES NOT FORCE PUPILS TO USE FREE TEXT-BOOKS.

It should be understood that a compulsory free text-book law does not compel any pupil to accept free text-books, if the parent chooses to purchase text-books.

The compulsion is only in requiring the school authorities of each city, town or other municipality to purchase books and offer the use of them free to all pupils.

## WEAKNESS OF TWO COMMON OBJECTIONS TO FREE TEXT-BOOKS.

The objection that the ownership of text-books is necessary to cultivate habits of independence and self-reliance seems to be especially weak, in view of the fact that many generations of school children in New York City, Philadelphia, Jersey City, Newark, New Brunswick, Paterson and other cities in New Jersey, Bristol, R. I., and many other places in different states have had free text-books, and no one has ever noticed any general lack of habits of independence and self-reliance in those people, either when compared with the citizens of other cities which have not had free text-books, or when compared with any reasonable ideal of what such habits should be in a good citizen.

Equally puerile is the claim that free text-books are an opening wedge to state socialism, or any other form of socialism, in view of the fact that the cities, towns and states which have longest used free text-books, are generally the ones where the socialistic cult has made least progress.

In the case of New York City, Philadelphia and other cities which have furnished free text-books from 30 to 78 years, no questions were asked about increase of attendance (as of course there exists no means of determining anything on that point), but only concerning the cost of free text-books, and how the law is regarded where it has been so long in operation.

As to the influence of free text-books in increasing the attendance in public schools, it will be noticed that there is substantial unanimity in the opinion that it increases attendance chiefly in the higher grades of the grammar schools and the high school, and, indeed, in towns and cities where the compulsory attendance law is well enforced there could not well be any material increase in the lower grades, as the pupils of these grades are the ones who are reached by the compulsory attendance law, and as free text-books have been furnished to all indigent pupils in Massachusetts since 1826, and for many years in all other states which have compulsory attendance laws, no one, before the compulsory free text-book law was passed, was excused from sending his child under 14 to school on the ground that he could not afford to buy books; but above the compulsory age it is plain that many pupils were kept out of school on account of the cost of books.

The considerable divergence of views on the extent to which pupils have been drawn into the public schools from parochial and other private schools by the free text-book law is easily accounted for by the difference (1) in communities and (2) in the excellence of such schools.

That such schools are not seriously affected by free text-books is certain from the long experience of New York City, Philadelphia, Newark,



Jersey City, Paterson, New Brunswick and many other cities in which, despite from 30 to 78 years' experience of free text-books in all the public schools, parochial and other private schools flourish, as well as in cities that have not tried free text-books.

### THE PRESENT STATUS (OCTOBER, 1898) OF THE FREE TEXT-BOOK QUESTION IS—

as to states and territories—as follows:

Ten states, having a population of 11,969,222, have compulsory free text-book laws, i. e., laws compelling all local school authorities to furnish all text-books free (but, of course, not compelling pupils to use them if they prefer to buy their own), passed at dates specified.

Maine.....	1889.	New Hampshire.....	1889.
Massachusetts .....	1884.	Vermont .....	1894.
Rhode Island.....	1893.	New Jersey.....	1894.
Pennsylvania .....	1893.	Delaware .....	1891.
Nebraska .....	1891.	Idaho .....	1893.

In all these states (except Delaware and Idaho) it was an evolution, i. e., the states had either had, for some years previous, a permissive free text-book law, i. e., a law specifically allowing local authorities to furnish all text-books free, or the right to furnish text-books free had been treated as discretionary with local school authorities, and in several of the states, notably Pennsylvania and New Jersey, there had been extensive adoption of the free text-book plan under this discretionary authority; in New Jersey "nearly all the cities and some 400 out of 1,500 school districts in the state outside the cities having furnished free text-books as far back as 1887," and all the large cities having furnished free text-books for from 25 to 40 years past.

The following 14 states, with a population of 21,285,648, have passed, at the dates specified, permissive free text-book laws, viz.:

Connecticut .....	1886.	South Dakota.....	1890.
Ohio .....	1894.	Colorado .....	1887.
Wisconsin .....	1887.	Iowa .....	1896.
North Dakota.....	1895.	Kansas .....	1897.
Maryland .....	1888.	Montana .....	1897.
Michigan .....	1889.	Washington .....	1897.
Minnesota .....	1893.	New York.....	1894.

In some of these states this permissive law was an outgrowth of the adoption of free text-books under the discretionary authority, notably in Michigan, Wisconsin and Maryland. In some of these states there has been a very extensive adoption of free text-books, as in Minnesota, where about two-thirds of the districts already have free books.

In New York the great cities of New York, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Syracuse and some 25 smaller places, aggregating a population of about 2,800,000, or nearly one-half the population of the state, have free text-books, and letters from the superintendents of all these places express entire

satisfaction with the system, and letters from several other cities state that they expect soon to adopt free books.

In three states and the District of Columbia, with a population of 7,127,349, there is no special statute on the free text-book question, but local school authorities have treated it as within their discretion, as appears below:

#### FLORIDA. MISSOURI. ILLINOIS.

In Florida two counties, Hernando and Volusia, have adopted free text-books, and the county superintendent of Hernando County writes as follows: "The free book system was adopted in this county on August 3, 1891, and has from the first given entire satisfaction to school boards, teachers, school patrons and the public. We would not discontinue it."

In Missouri, St. Louis is, so far, the only place which has adopted free text-books, and it only supplies to the four lowest grades. The upper grades, except indigent pupils, are required to buy books. They adopted this plan about five years ago.

In Illinois, District No. 2, of our neighboring city of Evanston, furnishes free books, and F. W. Nichols, superintendent, wrote, November 30, 1895: "We have furnished free text-books the past two years. It is a great success. The average cost per pupil, per year, is about 50 cents for books and about 60 cents for all other supplies." Other towns in the state which have furnished free books for many years and are entirely satisfied with the system are Geneva, Batavia, West Batavia and Dundee. I am informed that there are some other towns in the state which furnish free text-books, but inquiry at the office of the state superintendent at Springfield shows no records on the subject and I cannot locate them.

Superintendent Powell of Washington, D. C., writes, December 12, 1895: "We furnish text-books and all materials used by the child free to all grades below the high school.

"Free text-books were put into the schools gradually, having been furnished in the first four grades five years, in the fifth and sixth grades four years, and in the seventh and eighth grades three years, including the current year.

"There has been no opposition to this action on the part of Congress. It is very satisfactory to the people.

"The furnishing of books and materials has very perceptibly increased the attendance at school. Whether such increase has been at the expense of private and parochial schools, I have no means of knowing. The increase has been chiefly in the upper grades."

Ten states and territories are disgraced by making no provision for supplying indigent pupils with free books, viz.: West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma.

#### SUMMARY VIEW OF THE STATUS OF LARGE CITIES ON THE FREE TEXT-BOOK MATTER.

Of the 28 cities in the United States having above 100,000 population and aggregating a population of 9,697,960, the following 17, aggregating a population of 6,762,057, have furnished, since dates named, free text-books, and except Washington, D. C., Detroit and Denver, which do not furnish

to high school pupils, and St. Louis, which only furnishes to the four lower grades, they all furnish to all pupils.

(d) New York.....	(d) St. Louis .....1890.
(d) Brooklyn .....1885.	(d) Baltimore .....1884.
(c) Boston .....1884.	(c) Pittsburg .....1895.
(d) Buffalo .....1893.	(p) Detroit .....1891.
(d) Washington .....1890.	(p) Minneapolis .....1893.
(d) Newark.....	(d) Omaha .....1876.
(d) Jersey City.....	(p) Denver .....1894.
(d) Providence .....1892.	(c) Allegheny .....1895.
(d) Philadelphia .....1818.	

Of 14 cities having between 65,000 and 100,000, with an aggregate population of 1,117,406, the following 9, having an aggregate population of 711,224, have furnished free text-books to all pupils since dates named:

(d) Syracuse .....1894.	(p) New Haven.....1890.
(p) Toledo .....1894.	(c) Lowell .....1884.
(d) Paterson .....1889.	(p) Fall River.....1873.
(p) Scranton .....1889.	(c) Cambridge .....1884.
(c) Worcester .....1884.	

(Note.—The date of adoption in New York City cannot be determined, but it was about 50 years ago.

The New Jersey cities named have had free books for from 25 to 40 years, but the precise dates they are unable to report.)

Those marked (c) began to furnish under compulsory state laws; those marked (p) began to furnish under permissive state laws, and those marked (d) began to furnish without any special law on the question, in the exercise of a sound discretion under the general law for establishing and supporting free schools.

#### CHICAGO IS THE ONLY FIRST-CLASS CITY IN THE U. S. WHICH DOES NOT FURNISH FREE TEXT BOOKS.

It will be noticed that Chicago is the only city above 300,000 population in the country which does not furnish free books, and of a population of 1,031,406 living in the United States, in the 42 cities of above 65,000 people each, 7,473,277 have free text-books, and 3,341,129 (almost one-half of whom live in Chicago) do not have free text-books.

Replying to the author's letters of inquiry, the superintendents of all these cities state that the system gives general satisfaction, and in reply to specific inquiry on the subject of infection all report that they have never known of any case of the spread of contagious diseases as the result of the use of free books.

#### DISSATISFACTION WITH FREE TEXT BOOKS.

The only places, as far as the author has been able to learn, that express any dissatisfaction with free text-books, are three little villages in Michigan, aggregating a population of less than 1,000, and Volusia County, Florida,

whose superintendent has neglected to reply to two letters of inquiry, so that all that can be said is that "it is reported" that they are dissatisfied. Letters dated June to September, 1898, from all the state superintendents of states having compulsory free text-book laws, express entire satisfaction therewith, and declare that there is no likelihood of the laws being repealed, and all superintendents of states where there are permissive free text-book laws under same dates state that where the system has been fairly tried in their respective states, whether in rural districts or cities and towns, it has been satisfactory.

#### WHY MASS. LETTERS ARE FULLY COPIED.

The letters from the superintendents of all cities in Massachusetts of above 16,000 population have been pretty fully copied, not because they are one whit more favorable to free text-books than the letters from superintendents of all the cities and towns in other states, but because all of these cities, having been compelled to adopt free text-books by a state law in 1884 (and some of them having adopted the system as early as 1873, under a permissive law passed in that year), they furnish the only example of all the cities of a state using the free text-book system long enough to give it a very thorough trial, and yet not so long as to make it impossible to compare satisfactorily its effects with those of individual ownership, in all the directions of

- (1) Increased attendance.
- (2) Sources of the increase.
- (3) Distribution of the increase.
- (4) Relative cost of books.
- (5) Change of public opinion with relation to the law, and,
- (6) Effect, if any, on public health.

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#### COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE HEREINBEFORE MENTIONED.

From Hon. John W. Dickinson, State Superintendent of Massachusetts, 1876-1893.

Newtonville, Mass., September 20th, 1894.

My Dear Professor Marshall:—The free text-book system is working admirably well in Massachusetts. We think it has increased the attendance upon the public schools nearly 10 per cent.

The increase is quite marked in our high schools, where the books and supplies constitute an important item in the bill of expenses.

Doubtless the increase in attendance upon the public schools is due, in part, to additions from private schools.

There is no visible opposition to the free text-book system in Massachusetts. The system has been growing in favor ever since it was established. It will never be repealed, but will be strengthened, by permitting the children to keep their books (those used in the last year of their school course).

The use of the system has not only increased the school attendance, but it has greatly facilitated the work of the schools, by furnishing them with abundant means of doing the work.

Our schools can now be organized at once at the beginning of the term. The system has proved a very economical one, as the towns, acting as a unit, can supply their schools with books and all other means of study at much less expense than by acting as individuals. The adoption of the system is increasing in all parts of the country.

I am sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. DICKINSON.

From F. A. Hill, Secretary of State Board of Education since 1893:

State House, Boston, September 20th, 1894.

My Dear Sir:—There is no opposition to our present law, so far as I know, nor is there any probability that it will be repealed.

I think it has led to an absolute increase in attendance of children at school, particularly in schools of the higher grades.

The high-school attendance in the city of Cambridge, for instance, has doubled during the past eight years, although the population of the city has increased in a far less ratio. I have no doubt that this is partly due to the free text-book law. Undoubtedly, too, the free text-book law leads to the withdrawal of children from parochial and other private schools, but to what extent I cannot say.

We all believe in the law, although we freely admit the existence of minor objections to it; as, for instance, the increased burden it throws upon the teachers, and the withdrawal of text-books from the family library.

From Superintendent Edwin P. Seaver, Boston.

The general opinion in this state is that the system of free text-books works admirably. It has, in my judgment, worked an absolute increase in the attendance of children at school, particularly in the high schools, and in the upper grades of the grammar schools. It is said that many children have been drawn from parochial and other private schools where free text-books are not provided, but I have no means of verifying this statement, and cannot tell how much weight to give it, although I have no doubt it is entitled to some weight.

There is no opposition whatever to the free text-book law at present, nor any probability that it will be repealed.

The opposition to the free text-book system which was manifested at the time the bill was before the Legislature has since utterly disappeared.

It promotes a smooth working of the schools, and the prompt beginning of lessons at the opening of the school year, to such an extent that teachers generally would be very sorry to return to the old system.

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From Superintendent Thomas M. Balliet, Springfield.

1. Some of our parochial schools had to furnish free text-books in order to hold their pupils, several years after the free text-book law went into effect. From this I should infer that free text-books had the effect of bringing in pupils from these schools.

2. The attendance in other private schools for young children has been steadily decreasing during the last six or seven years. There may be more than one cause for this, however.

3. Whether it has absolutely increased the attendance at the public school or not, I cannot say. I should think its tendency was to produce this effect.

4. There is no opposition to the law, as far as I know, except on the part of a conservative person here and there. There is no reason to think that this law will ever be repealed, judging from its present popularity.

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From Superintendent A. P. Marble, Worcester, Mass.

The system of free text-books has worked admirably here. The only real objection is obviated by the use of covers, renewed yearly.

In my opinion, the absolute attendance is increased; and better still, there is no loss of time at the opening of school in getting parents to buy the necessary books.

There is no opposition to the law and it will never be repealed.

I think the increased attendance is well distributed throughout all the grades.

In my judgment free text-books—all the necessary tools—have become a necessary corollary to free schools. I was not an advocate of this law, nor yet an opponent when it was enacted. I was willing to see it tried; and the trial has converted me to its advocacy. The net cost paid by the public is much less than the cost used to be to the parents.

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From Superintendent A. K. Whitcomb, Lowell.

The free text-book system in Massachusetts has come to stay, beyond any question. Opinion, so far as I know, is unanimous in its favor.

It has undoubtedly increased the attendance on the public schools by withdrawing

pupils from parochial schools—indeed, it has forced most of the latter to adopt a free-book system—but I do not see that it can, here, have much effect on the total attendance on all schools. We try to enforce a compulsory education law, so as to get all children of school age into school, and free text-books can do no more. Possibly free text-books help some who are above the compulsory age limit to attend longer, but I have no statistics on this point.

The only objection ever urged is that of possible danger of communicating disease in passing books from hand to hand. We do not know that this has ever occurred, but it is, of course, possible.

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From Superintendent O. B. Bruce, Lynn.

Our experience in Lynn warrants me in saying that the free text-book law has been a success.

It has increased the attendance in our schools, regardless of parochial or other schools.

That increase has been more noticeable in the upper grammar grades through our high schools, where annual personal outlay for books would be a large sum even for families in moderate circumstances.

We know of no opposition to the law, other than that of fear of contagion, which we overcome by transfer with each pupil at promotion of his or her books, and by changing the patent covers every year, and by enforced inspection of books by teachers each term, so as to know their condition.

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From Superintendent Alvin F. Pease, Northampton.

I think it has increased the absolute attendance, and to some extent the attendance from the parochial schools. I am unable to say how the different grades compare with each other in this respect. I am aware of almost no opposition to the law at present, and think there is no probability that it will be repealed. I have an impression that the attendance of children is increased more in higher grades than in lower.

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From Superintendent J. C. Edgerly, Fitchburg.

1. The attendance has absolutely increased.
2. Do not hear of any opposition to the law. I think no one entertains the idea of repeal.
3. The increase has been in the high school and the higher grades of the grammar schools.

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From Superintendent Eben H. Davis, Chelsea.

The system of free text-books has undoubtedly increased the attendance in all grades of our schools. I do not think the parochial schools have diminished in any way by the system; the increased attendance is absolute and sure.

There is no opposition to the law on the part of taxpayers, and no complaint of any kind made.

I think the increased attendance occasioned by the system is most marked in the higher grades, and especially in the high schools. The statutes require attendance in the lower grades.

It is an excellent system on one condition, and that is, that the book shall follow the pupil who first receives it, through the various grades in which it is required, and then, when it has fulfilled its mission, it should be given to the pupil to take home.

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From Superintendent W. E. Hatch, New Bedford.

1. We believe in the free text-book system.
2. It has increased the attendance in the lower schools somewhat during the past year, owing to the hard times, by drawing away from parochial schools. I think it may influence a few each year to go to the high school who, otherwise, would not, but I am not one who believes that it has added much to the attendance.
3. I hear of no opposition, and I do not think it ever will be repealed.
4. Its great advantages are: (1). It relieves pressure upon the worthy poor.

(2). It saves time and friction in school. (3). It is by far the most economical way of providing books. Our cost for all books and supplies, including high school, and all paper, pencils, etc., was last year 75 cents a pupil for day schools, 12 cents a pupil for evening schools. (4). The law is just and right; everything connected with public schools should be free.

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From Superintendent Freeman Putney, Gloucester.

Our system of free text-books is working well.

I cannot say, with certainty, that it has or has not "absolutely increased the attendance of children at school."

It is my belief that such attendance has been increased in our high school.

There is little or no real opposition now.

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From Superintendent E. L. Kirtland, Holyoke.

Undoubtedly "free text-books" have attracted many pupils from parochial schools.

There is some objecting to the transfer of soiled books to the hands of persons who did not soil them, but this evil can be reduced to a small matter, by good management. I do not think there is a probability of the repeal of the statute.

Undoubtedly attendance has been largely increased by the free text-book law.

As our compulsory system forces all persons into school until the age of fourteen years is attained, the free text-book law induces many older persons to take the higher courses who would not be able or feel able to do so. I think the enactment is worthy of retention for this reason alone.

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From Superintendent C. A. Daniels, Malden.

The increase is larger in the upper grades of the grammar schools and the high school than in the primary schools. The increase has not come so much from parochial and other private schools as from families in which the parents cannot afford to purchase text-books.

There is no opposition to the law, and no probability that it will be repealed.

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From Superintendent B. B. Russell, Brockton.

I do not think that the free text-book law has done much to increase the attendance, although it may have done something in that direction at the high school, for we have a law compelling attendance up to fourteen years of age. I do not think it has affected the attendance at the parochial school: if so, it must be in very slight degree. There is no opposition to it, whatever, that I know of.

To my mind, the great advantage is in the saving of time by every pupil being supplied at the beginning of the term. Everybody seems satisfied with the law.

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From Superintendent Julia M. Dewey, North Adams.

I think it increases the attendance by withdrawing from the parochial schools. I do not know of any opposition—that is, any active opposition, to the law.

I think the increase is felt more in the grades where several text-books are used. I should oppose free text-books on hygienic grounds. If the better classes were obliged to buy books, and the poorer were given books (for their own), I think there would be less sickness among pupils. I think many are coming to believe this.

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From Superintendent J. E. Burke, Lawrence:

First—The system of free text-books is working all right.

Second—I do not think it draws pupils from parochial and private schools, as, on inquiry, I find that they furnish all those who desire it with free text-books in the parochial school here.

Third—As to opposition to the law: I have never heard of any.

Fourth—I think it has increased the attendance in the high and higher grades of the grammar schools, where the cost of books is high; in the lower grades I do not think it has affected the attendance.

From Superintendent Henry Whittimore, Waltham:

First—I think it has not absolutely increased the attendance of children at school. Under the law of Massachusetts, in force previous to the enactment of the free text-book law, school authorities had the power to supply indigent children with what books they needed. With us, this was done, and no questions asked. The children received the benefit of the law without too close questioning.

Wherever parochial schools have been established in this state, the children have attended them without any reference whatever to the question of free text-books. From a close observation over such a school in this city, I think it does not make the slightest difference in the attendance upon that school.

Children who have withdrawn from the local parochial school have done so, as far as my observation extends, entirely independent of the question of the expense of attending the parochial school.

As far as I am able to determine, there is no objection to the law, or any probability that it will be repealed.

From Superintendent W. C. Bates, Fall River:

I have, myself, observed the workings of this system in several towns and in the cities of Lawrence and Fall River, and, in my opinion, it has worked well.

I am of the opinion that it has increased the attendance at the public schools, especially in the higher grades.

I think that many pupils who might go to other schools are drawn into the public schools because they are free.

I think there is no considerable opposition to the law, and that there is no probability that it will be repealed.

I think it is wrong, however, to send children out of our schools without their school books. They ought to have their books, for reference, all through their lives.

While I have no figures at hand on which to base my opinion, I feel sure that there has been an absolute increase in attendance, and that pupils tend to remain longer in the higher grades.

From Superintendent F. Cogswell, Cambridge:

It is working well.

It has increased the attendance at school.

There is no opposition to it.

The increased attendance is greater in the high schools.

From Superintendent H. W. Lull, Quincy:

We have no parochial school. I have no data to consult, but I think that the attendance has been increased in the higher grades, where text-books were a great burden.

There is no probability or possibility of a repeal of the law.

Whenever a "scare" comes (diphtheria, scarlet fever, etc.) then there is, for a time, opposition.

The increase of attendance is in the high school and high grammar.

A very important gain is in the greater variety of text-books—particularly reading matter. Exchange from school to school was impossible the old way.

From Secretary A. B. Brown, Salem Board of Education:

The system is working well.

Yes; in the high school there is an absolute increase of attendance.

There is no considerable opposition, nor is there any probability that it will be repealed.

The increase of attendance is in the higher grades.

From Superintendent G. A. Southworth, Somerville:

The free text-book system is working well. It has absolutely increased the attendance of children at school.

There is no opposition, nor probability that the law will be repealed.

The increase of attendance is greater in the higher grades, using more books.



From Secretary of Massachusetts State Board of Health, January 30th, 1895:

In reply to yours of January 24, inquiring as to the possibility of communicating contagious diseases by means of free text-books in the public schools, I would respectfully state that we have no information whatever, which would settle the question.

There are so many other conditions and circumstances which surround the school life of children and which affect the prevalence of contagious diseases among them, that the effect of free circulation of text-books is entirely outweighed by such conditions.

I send you a copy of a law which was enacted in 1884, which, in my opinion, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the prevalence of the infectious diseases of children. I also send a pamphlet, containing, on page xxxiii, some statistics on the same subject for twenty years, which show that these diseases do not appear to have had a very marked diminution, but have increased and decreased irregularly, except typhoid fever and consumption, which have both diminished.

The law of 1884, which Secretary Abbott mentions, is similar to that in other states, forbidding attendance at public schools from households where there are cases of contagious diseases.

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From Philadelphia Board of Health, September 4th, 1895:

The rule of the Board of Health with regard to school books which have been used by children suffering from contagious diseases is to burn the same, presuming that there is a possibility of communication of disease by such media. We find it a very difficult thing to disinfect books, without seriously damaging them.

We have not made any investigations to prove the liability of the spread of contagious disease by school books, but feel satisfied that there is a strong probability of such an occurrence if books that are in common use are suffered to become infected.

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From the New York City Health Department no reply has been received, except a copy of Scientific Bulletin No. 3, containing a paper, entitled "Some Investigations as to the Possible Agency of Writing Utensils in the Spread of Diphtheria in the Public Schools," which seems to show that as long as children will moisten pencils in their mouths, there is considerable danger that if diphtheria appears it may be spread if a pencil which has been so moistened by a child who has virulent diphtheria is used by another child within, say 24 hours, and concludes as follows: "One of the possible sources, therefore, of contagion from diphtheria will be removed when each child is required to take charge of his own writing utensils."

**FREE TEXT-BOOK COMMITTEE**  
—OF THE—  
**ILLINOIS STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.**

Office, 1537-9, 79 Dearborn Street,

**CHICAGO.**

**OFFICERS.**

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